

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PLAN

FY 2003 - FY 2007



March 2003

PREFACE

Changing United States demographics will have a continued impact on the Department of Commerce's (DOC) human capital strategy over the next five years. Although the retirements by baby boomers are projected to average only average 3 percent per year at the Department, we can still expect approximately 1000 employees to retire annually. Ultimately, the number of available skilled workers in mission critical occupations will be significantly impacted by turnover and retirements, and continue to decrease even as the economy fluctuates. In the past three decades, the nations' birth rate has dropped 24 percent. In the United States, the number of people aged 25 to 39 has decreased from 62 million in 1990 to 60 million 1999. By 2006, the number of workers age 34 and younger will decrease to 36 percent of the United States labor force. Heeding the data, the Department of Commerce is actively engaged in a process to assess its workforce and address projected shortages for critical positions by developing recruitment strategies for new entrants, mid-level candidates and a fresh influx of senior executive leadership into the workforce. Our intent is to strategically position the Department to compete for top college talent and experienced workers, which are part of a smaller pool of available workers. The Department recognizes that a much smaller pool translates into a much more expensive hire, requiring the use of personnel flexibilities and innovative solutions in order to compete for talent with other Federal agencies, as well as the private sector. Leveraging the resources of bureaus will serve an integral role in addressing the challenge for increased resources to implement new solutions.

According to the Society for Human Resources Management, "[b]est practice companies excel at workforce planning, both short term and long term. They are purposeful in evaluating their strategy (present and future), knowing what skills are needed to execute that strategy, assessing workers for those skills and developing actionable plans to ensure that workers with those skills are available to the business." Overall, the Department is implementing a human capital strategy to build and expand our workforce capacity to deliver improved service to our customers. This Recruitment and Retention Plan delineates our strategy to recruit and hire a diverse and highly qualified workforce from sources external and internal to the government, as well as our commitment to grow and develop the dedicated employees already on-board.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department's 2003-2007 Recruitment and Retention Plan is a companion document to the Department's Workforce Restructuring Plan for FY 2003 and FY 2007. This document embraces and supports the foundation laid in the Department's human capital plan and puts forward recruitment and retention strategies to address the crosscutting workforce issues facing the Department and its bureaus. It is intended that the Department of Commerce Recruitment and Retention Plan will be updated on an annual basis throughout that period to reflect changes impacting its implementation, as will be done with the Workforce Restructuring Plan.

Actions in this plan are based on extensive analyses and findings documented in the Workforce Restructuring Plan, Communities of Practice discussions, and additional analyses conducted in support of this document. Under the Communities of Practice initiative, we identified three mission critical areas: the Economics/Statistics and Business Practice, Scientific and Technical Knowledge Practice, and Leadership and Management Practice. Specific bureaus were identified to work collaboratively in these targeted areas to share best practices, expertise, and lessons learned. The Communities of Practice identified the following strategic human resources areas as current and future challenges: retention, training, and competency gaps.

The Department has examined three crosscutting strategic human capital challenges that need to be addressed Department-wide, as well as unique challenges facing individual bureaus. It has identified opportunities in which its leadership can play a key role in restructuring the Department's workforce as a whole. To respond to these issues, we are employing concrete strategies as outlined in this plan, to shift from human resources "maintenance" activities, such as filling vacancies and orienting new employees, to a more pro-active "workforce replenishment" effort through which we will build competencies, redesign organizations and jobs, create career pipelines, provide training to retool the workforce when needed, and create and maintain a diverse workforce by identifying new pools of candidates for entry and mid-level positions. In short, the tools with which we manage our human capital are themselves undergoing transformation.

Outlined in this Recruitment and Retention Plan, are several actions to reach potential pools of applicants within and outside the federal government (internal versus external). External activities include a more comprehensive college relations program, use of USA Jobs and Commerce Opportunities On-Line (COOL) for posting vacancies and accepting applications, participation in job and career fairs, and continuation and expansion of our High School Development Program. Efforts to attract applicants from within the federal establishment, and also to train and retain Commerce employees, will include use of COOL and USA Jobs as described above, and a plethora of knowledge management programs directed toward development and retention of employees at all levels.

Introduction

As noted in the June 2002 Departmental Workforce Restructuring Plan, the three crosscutting issues identified as the most urgent and formidable human capital challenges facing the Department are:

- o Retention High rates of turnover expected in the most mission-critical occupations.
- o Training A projected surge in retirements, particularly in the Senior Executive Service.
- o Competencies Lack of needed vision with respect to how management initiatives such as e-Government and competitive sourcing will affect the general, technical and leadership competencies that will be needed to carry out our mission prospectively.

Recruiting, hiring, developing and retaining employees to gain the strategic competencies is a necessary response to these challenges. This plan targets positions critical to the successful performance of the Department (see Attachment 1). It also details the approach that will be taken by the Department in developing that response.

Recruitment Perspective

Over the last five years, the average age of accessions in the Department rose by one year each year, from 36 years of age to 41. This indicates that the Department is hiring from a narrow place within the employment pipeline, which bodes ill for succession planning over the long term. Sound succession planning includes the use of tools to draw from sources at various points along the pipeline. It appears Commerce uses and/or develops substantially fewer active hiring sources at various points along the pipeline. The Department has been, in practice, drawing from the same well, which at some point in time will run dry.

Recruitment outcomes and achievement of workforce diversity goals are also influenced by how successfully various employment programs, hiring authorities and initiatives, particularly those targeted at hiring students and recent high school and college graduates, are utilized. Chief among them are student employment programs and authorities including, the Workforce Recruitment Program, Student Career Experience Program, Outstanding Scholar Authority, Bilingual and Bi-cultural Authority, and internship programs, including the Presidential Management Intern Program, the Federal Career Intern Program, the Post Secondary Internship Program, and the National Academy Foundation Program.

The Department is committed to having a diverse workforce. A particularly troublesome demographic with respect to diversity is that among cabinet-level agencies over the last seven years, Commerce's total permanent Hispanic employment in calendar year 2002,

was 3.4 percent of Commerce's permanent workforce. From 1995 until 2001, Hispanic employment rose only .9 percent.

Workforce Retention

The April 2002 interim Workforce Restructuring Plan cited turnover statistics for FY 2001 that are startling. Of employees who left the Department in FY 2001, retirements only represented about 21 percent of 3,287 separations. More than 23 percent left to work at other Federal agencies and approximately 49 percent of the separating employees simply resigned. Particularly troubling is that most losses of new employees due to resignations and transfer occur within the first 3 years of their careers. The turnover in GS-9 through GS-12 journeyman level positions, a traditional source of candidates for supervisory and senior technical positions, was substantial. OPM's May 2001 workforce demographic data indicates that relative to other executive branch agencies, Commerce has the highest turnover rate among Cabinet-level agencies. In several mission critical occupations employees are leaving as fast or faster than new staff is being hired. Turnover data over a 10-year period indicate that in 1992, the Department lost two employees for every one hired. In the mid-1990s, Federal agencies were mandated to undertake an aggressive downsizing effort to reduce the overall size of the government. Voluntary early retirement authority was coupled with voluntary separation incentive payments (VSIPs) to encourage separations, and agencies were not allowed to replace employees that accepted VSIPs. Regrettably, government-wide, the downsizing effort was not executed in a strategic manner, thus, loss of employees possessing necessary critical competencies was inevitable and the competency gap widened. FY 2001 saw the loss of three employees for every new hire, however, the decennial census draw-down was a large contributing factor to this period's heightened turnover rate. The internal workforce that remains as a source to fill management positions possesses substantially less federal work experience than the norm. The average Commerce employee has worked 12.8 years in the Federal Government; the overall average is 17.1 years.

Couple this turnover trend with the fact that we are hiring an older worker with projected fewer work years remaining into an environment where the entire population is less experienced than typical, and the complexity of the workforce staffing picture increases exponentially. Clearly, based on the above analysis, Commerce will need to implement an integrated strategic approach to human capital management. By examining the best practices in recruitment, training and development, retention and succession planning, and utilizing available automated processes and E-government solutions for hiring and performance management, we plan to implement more effective and efficient human capital strategies. The Departmental Office of Human Resources Management will take a leadership role in the rolling out a number of programs department-wide.

STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITMENT/RETENTION

Objectives

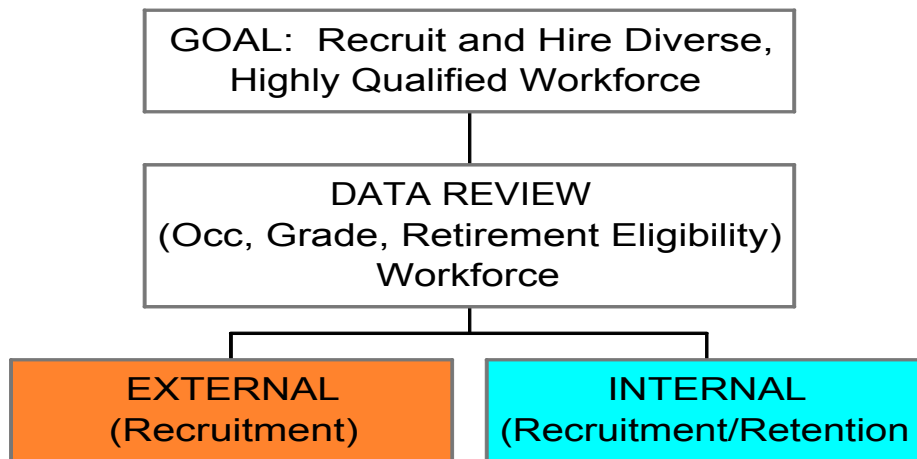
Based on our analysis of recruitment and retention challenges, the Department's approach to staffing will encompass the following objectives:

- Establish workforce analyses and planning as the foundation for recruitment and retention solutions.
- Commit top-level leadership, active partnership between managers and human resources in the hiring process, and active involvement of diverse affinity groups and stakeholders in the process.
- Utilize automated tools and personnel flexibilities.
- Rebuild the entry-level pipeline.
- Reinvigorate student employment programs as a productive recruitment tool.
- Identify mid-level recruitment activities and recruitment sources.
- Establish vibrant university partnerships and alliances.
- Utilize training and development programs as an active retention tool throughout the employee's life cycle.
- Leverage and collaborate bureau resources.

Performance Outcomes

With the accomplishment of these objectives, we expect the following outcomes and will establish measures to assess and monitor our accountability with this plan:

- Increased quality of hires.
- Improved hiring cycle times.
- Increased retention rates.
- Enhanced development opportunities.
- Improved effectiveness of recruitment and retention strategies.
- Developed strong leadership talent.



Goal

The Department's goal to "recruit and hire a diverse, highly qualified workforce" is key to strengthening overall Departmental management and effectiveness. Given the critical nature of most hires, it is good business sense to link retention strategies at the outset of developing a recruitment approach.

To accomplish this goal, the Department analyzed extensive workforce and demographic data, as well as hiring and attrition trends for 20 mission critical occupations (15 professional and 5 administrative). Individual bureau workforce restructuring and recruitment plans were also reviewed to identify mission critical occupations, future business objectives, estimated occupational needs, and projected future competencies. The Department then analyzed potential recruitment sources and the effectiveness of current recruitment activities. Based on this joint analyses of recruitment needs and supply sources, the Department's Recruitment and Retention Plan will emphasize stronger entry level recruitment through external college outreach, improved mid-level recruitment from professional organizations and development of the incumbent employee through career and knowledge management programs throughout the employee life-cycle. We must ensure that, because of our aging workforce, we have a balance of new employees who will have long careers with the Department.

DATA REVIEW

Turnover in Mission Critical Occupations. There is no issue more critical to the Department's workforce restructuring than current and projected turnover in mission critical positions and the domino effect it precipitates. Every bureau is affected by this challenge. The Department's twenty (20) mission critical occupations face the prospect of losing much of their current workforces due to turnover and retirement over the next five years, as shown in Attachment 1. Turnover in this case, includes separations of employees due to reasons other than retirement. Eligible retirees include persons who qualify for optional or early out retirement. Of the twenty occupations, five are administrative and fifteen are professional.

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0110 Economist 0301 Misc. Admin. & Prog. 0343 Management Analysis 0482 Fishery Biology 0855 Electronic Engineer 0905 Attorney 1101 Gen'l Bus. & Industry | 1140 Trade Specialist 1224 Patent Examining 1301 Gen'l Phys. Science 1310 Physics 1315 Hydrology 1320 Chemistry 1340 Meteorology | 1360 Oceanography 1529 Mathematical Statistician 1530 Statistician 1550 Computer Science 1801 Gen'l Inspections, Investigations & Compliance 2210 Info Tech Specialist |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

All but two occupations (1315-Hydrology, and 1340-Meteorology) could possibly lose one-half or more of their current population for the period covered by this plan (FY 2003 through 2007). Six of the 20 occupations (Economist-0110; Miscellaneous Administration and Program-0301; Management Analysis-0343; Attorney-0905; General Business and Industry-1101; and General Inspections, Investigations and Compliance-1801) could lose approximately three-fourths or more (75 percent or more) of their populations during the same period.

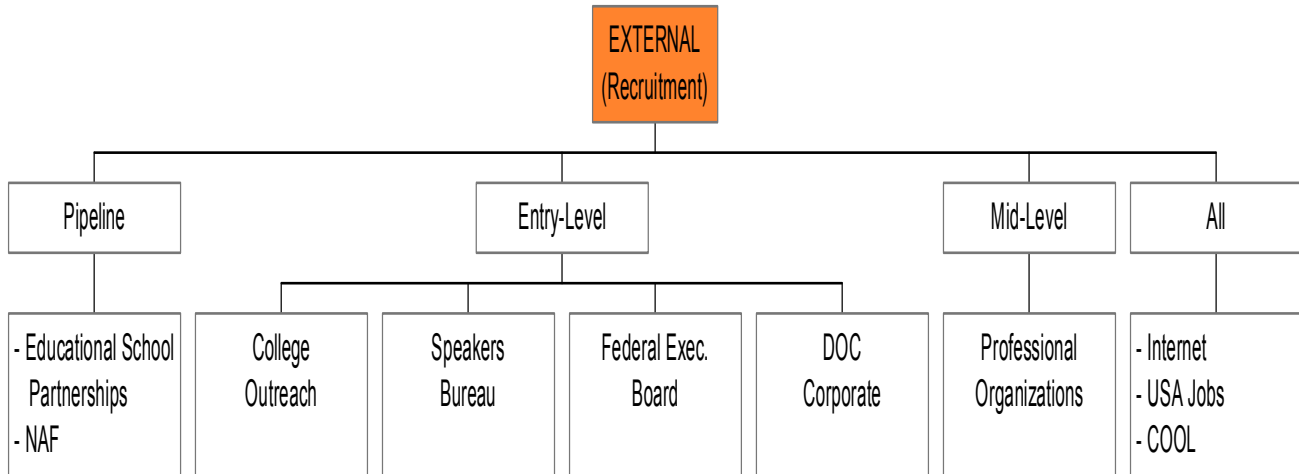
Four-fifths (4/5) of the 20 mission critical occupations (excludes Attorney-0905; Patent Examining-1224; Computer Science-1550; and General Inspections, Investigations and Compliance-1801) could lose 30 percent or more of their current populations over the next five years due to potential retirements. Conversely, the remaining one-fifth (includes 0905-Attorney; Patent Examining-1224; Mathematical Statistician-1529; and General Inspection, Investigations and Compliance-1801) could lose the same percentage of employees through turnover.

Projected Surge in Retirements. While the Department's high turnover rate affects the viability of the entire workforce, the potential surge in retirement in the Department's senior executive service (SES) cadre is reaching startling proportions. Specifically, by FY 2007, 344 members (71 percent) of the Department's existing SES and equivalents are expected to retire. With this possible exodus of experienced leaders throughout the Department, it is imperative that action begins now to develop future leaders.

Although much has been made about the prospective losses of senior executives across the Federal government and in the Department of Commerce, we face similar challenges with our mid-level supervisors and managers. Attachment 2 shows the number of supervisors and managers in Commerce and the potential impact of turnover and retirement eligibles on their numbers. There is the possibility that we could lose approximately three-fourths or more (75 percent or more) of current supervisors and managers to turnover and retirements at all grade levels above GS-10 and equivalent over the period covered by the plan. This prospect is particularly alarming as this pool of employees (at least at the GS-14 and GS-15 levels) typically serves as the “recruiting pool” for future senior executives.

Examining the implications of workforce turnover throughout the Department makes it apparent that this extremely broad issue requires a range of responses – from projecting bureau-specific and Department-wide recruitment needs to determining options for assimilating newly acquired staff within the Department and its bureaus. In short, the Department and bureaus face a “workforce replenishment” challenge. Departmental leadership can play an essential role in assuring that the entire Department prioritizes and successfully meets this challenge.

Reshaping Workforce Competencies. The Department’s bureaus have made considerable progress in defining the competencies needed to perform today’s work. They have also begun to redefine existing competencies in light of such influences as e-Government and job re-engineering. However, additional clarity is needed regarding these changes and the impact of competitive sourcing and mission evolution. The Department will oversee the effort to further define these projected – or “to be” – competencies and integrate them into a comprehensive staffing plan and workforce competency gap analysis.



Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of external recruitment activities is a top priority for the Department. Commerce has identified specific sources for developing the pipeline and securing a diverse pool of entry-level applicants, mid-level candidates and executive leadership talent to meet this objective. To identify entry-level employees with new competencies, Commerce is developing a dynamic college outreach program, which consists of four key components:

- Building relationships between the Department's leadership and the college or universities senior administrators
- Establishing a Speakers Bureau featuring technical experts to speak with staff and students primarily in the classroom setting
- Utilizing the Federal Executive Board to foster a regional presence and leverage community relationships, and
- Developing a cadre of trained corporate recruiters.

| COLLEGE OUTREACH | SPEAKERS BUREAU | FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD | CORPORATE RECRUITERS |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>Foster Relationships</u> DOC Officials University Officials Presidents Vice Presidents, Academic Affairs Provosts Alumni Associates | <u>Educate College Body</u> DOC Experts Educate: Speak on specific disciplines, Student body, and Faculty | <u>Build Community/ Business Relationships</u> Business Relations Coordination with Florida, Puerto Rico Texas, California District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia and Select University. | <u>Advance work/Recruit Applicants</u> Pre-meet with students and career counselors. Identify top talent. Obtain resumes. Maintain contact with students. |

College Relations Program

The Department of Commerce will establish a more comprehensive strategy with respect to its college outreach effort. The Office of Strategic Resources, Office of Human Resources Management, will coordinate the effort which will consist of visits to university administrators by senior Commerce officials to establish the framework of the relationships; presentations in classrooms, to student groups, faculty, and administrators by Commerce subject matter experts to educate the institutions about the work of the Department and backgrounds needed to perform that work; a pilot partnership with a Federal Executive Board (Board) which will establish the business relationship at a local level between institutions in the Board's geographic jurisdiction and the Department; corporate recruiters who will visit campuses to share information about Commerce and collect resumes and applications; and contacting and working with alumni groups to further Commerce's relationship with the institutions.

The Department will establish a DOC Speakers Bureau as part of the College Relations Program. The Speakers Bureau will consist of employees, managers and supervisors (subject matter experts) who will inform potential applicants of the work they perform, e.g., international trade negotiations, scientific research, statistical methods, and job opportunities associated with their respective career fields. Presentations will be made at colleges, universities, and professional organizations.

To maintain an on-going presence on various college campuses, Commerce will establish a new partnership with the Federal Executive Boards. Starting with a pilot in Miami, Florida, we have identified resources to meet periodically with university administrators and students. Commerce will leverage the community relationships and business networks already in existence at the Board to increase awareness of the Commerce organization.

Corporate recruiters will be identified and trained to ensure they are properly equipped (knowledge and skill) to market the Department to potential job applicants. Prior to attending career fairs, the recruiters will go to the campus a day early to meet with students and career counselors to solicit interest and address questions in a more informal setting. Establishing relationships early with the students and counselors will enhance the Commerce college presence and should increase the interest in the Department. Recruiters will then attend career fairs and conferences at colleges, universities, professional organizations, conduct information sessions, and create a positive and professional image of the Department and its workforce.

We will use a variety of programs to interest students in, and develop them for employment with the Department. This would include employing students under the Student Career Experience Program and Students Temporary Experience Programs. As well, we will seek expanded use of the Workforce Recruitment Program, which is directed toward students with disabilities, promote the Management Intern Program, and continue to utilize the Post Secondary Internship Program. Plans are underway to pilot a Departmental cooperative education program within the Office of Administration, Office of the Secretary.

To encourage the interest of young people at the high school level in DOC's scientific, technical and administrative careers, Commerce is using strategic partnerships-in-education, such as Adopt-a-School, the National Academy Foundation (NAF), the Technology Summit and Ocean Science Bowl, to build academic prerequisites and a foundation for college disciplines that support Commerce careers.

Strengthening the Commerce presence at professional organizations, such as trade associations, professional societies, and alumni organizations, ensures that Commerce managers have a steady pipeline of experienced workers able to "hit the ground running". This recruitment strategy will strengthen and leverage a growing practice of mid-level recruitment.

Commerce Opportunities On-Line (COOL), an automated staffing application system developed by the Department, continues to improve the quality of the recruitment process. Through the use of weighted, competency based questions, applicants' responses provide clear indications of levels of proficiency and experience for rating and ranking candidates for Commerce jobs. The COOL system is the corner piece of the Department's recruitment initiative. It is linked to the Staffing Timeliness Measures (STM) system to track cycle time efficiency for recruitment actions. It will also be linked to the Department's Human Capital Asset Management System (HCAMS) to track the quality and effectiveness of external recruitment activities. COOL is linked to the OPM system of USA JOBS, which posts all Federal jobs nationwide.

Job/Career Fairs. The Department will continue to attend career/job fairs both as part of its College Relations Program and as outreach to professional organizations, such as the National Society of Black Engineers and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. The career/job fairs will target applicants for specific mission critical occupations.

Department of Commerce Career Days. The Department will establish Career Days (mini-career fairs) on college campuses to inform students about career opportunities within the Department, and how to search and apply for DOC jobs. The colleges and universities targeted for career days are those which graduate students in degree programs needed for the Department's critical occupations, and those which have diverse student bodies. The advantage of DOC Career Days is that they allow a single focus on the Department, exposing the student population to our work and employment opportunities.

Human Capital Asset Management System (HCAMS). This system is the successor to the job fair resume database. It will house resumes of potential job applicants resulting from events associated with our college relations or career fair programs. It is linked to the COOL System, upgraded to track applicants to Commerce jobs who were recruited from colleges, universities, and job/career fairs, and whose resumes that reside in the database. Human resources professionals will be responsible for shepherding resumes appearing in the database by ensuring each gets the greatest possible exposure and consideration for placement in Commerce positions. Resumes will continue to be available to managers, supervisors, and other human resources professionals at their desktop.

High School Development Program. The Department of Commerce is developing educational alliances and facilitating programs that combine school-based learning and work-based experiences to promote early interest and provide exposure to careers in the Federal government among talented students. The Department partnered with the National Academy Foundation (NAF), to develop information technology skills among high school students. The partnership includes a specialized four-year curriculum provided by the participating schools, Federal government internships, and Co-op opportunities. The Department of Commerce is involved in mentoring and providing internships for students enrolled in the Academy of Finance, another DOC and NAF education partnership program.

Commerce Opportunities On-Line/USA Jobs. The Department will continue to use Commerce Opportunities On-Line (COOL), our web-based application and staffing tool, and USA Jobs, the Office of Personnel Management's electronic job posting board, to seek applicants for Commerce positions (all DOC positions posted in COOL are also posted on USA Jobs). The COOL web site clearly has been a major source of applicants. At any given time, COOL will typically display 200-300 vacancy announcements or job opportunities. Since April of 2000, COOL has posted over 10,000 announcements, had over 1,000,000 job searches performed, and has accepted and processed over 200,000 applications.

A Call-to-Serve. The Office of Personnel Management and the Partnership for Public Service created the national "Call-to-Serve" college network. There are approximately 400 colleges in the "Call-to-Serve" network. The purpose of the "Call-to-Serve" initiative is to show young people the benefits of public service. The Department will utilize this network to showcase its employment opportunities at schools graduating students in degree programs required for mission critical occupations.

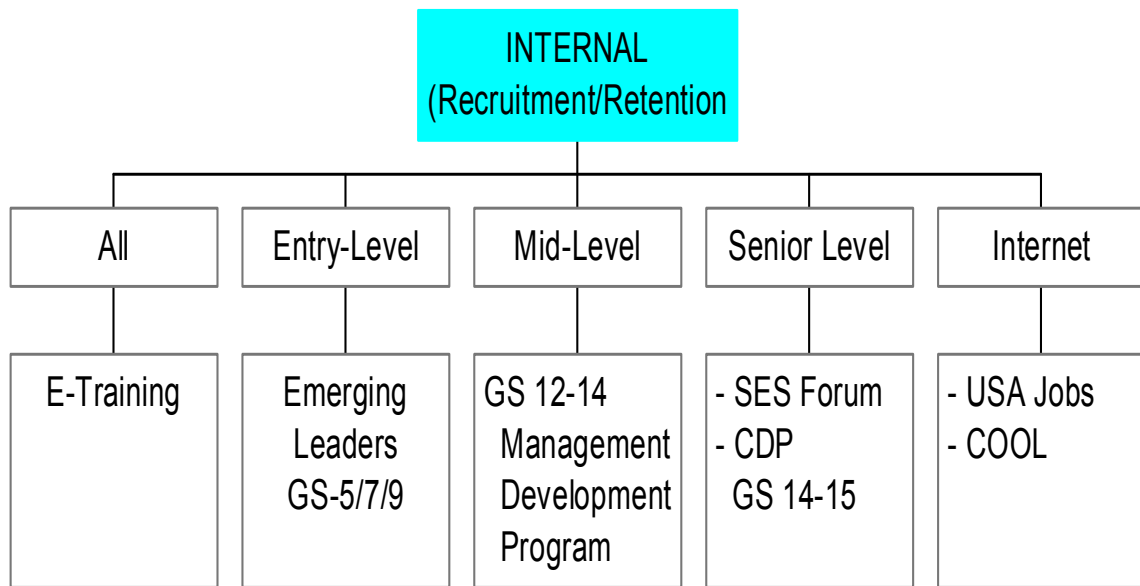
Marketing Tools. The Department uses a number of media to communicate the "Commerce Story" to potential applicants, such as information sessions and printed materials. Corporate presentations on the Department's mission and employment opportunities are directed especially to students, but also others, for the purpose of encouraging them to apply for DOC jobs. All recruiters will use the same or similar material for information sessions to ensure consistent and comprehensive presentations.

The presentations will be used whenever the opportunity arises, e.g., college campuses, professional associations, conferences, secondary, and elementary schools.

Our booklet, ***Change the World Through Commerce***, provides an overview of the United States Department of Commerce, describing each bureau, its mission and major occupations. One brochure, ***Realize Your Dreams***, is directed toward college students and outlines employment incentives and opportunities. Another brochure, ***The Commerce Opportunities On-line Way to Apply for Jobs*** informs users how to apply to Commerce employment opportunities through the Department's automated application system, COOL. A new marketing brochure focused on the disabled community will be developed to encourage people with disabilities to apply for DOC jobs and will also chronicle the benefits of Federal employment.

The Department's Office of Human Resources Management is considering development of a mini-CD to be distributed at career fairs, student and faculty lectures, meetings and other such events and to career placement offices. It would contain information about the Department of Commerce and bureau missions, major or primary occupational areas, employment and benefits information and links to related web sites. Based on a recent survey of college students by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, mini-CDs are one of the top five give-aways at career and job fairs.

Applicant Surveys. Survey questions will be employed in COOL to determine how applicants learned about Commerce jobs and to obtain feedback on their experiences with COOL. Responses to the survey questions will enable staff to evaluate which outreach activities are most effective, re-direct efforts as necessary, and evaluate concerns about the COOL system.



An often-underutilized applicant source is the internal candidate, the DOC employee. Commerce recognizes that developing internal candidates has the advantages of building employee competencies, improving employee satisfaction and developing strong succession lines through the transfer of knowledge. Through a comprehensive program of career development and training activities, Commerce has a variety of programs available for employees throughout their life cycle: the Emerging Leaders Program (GS-5/7/9), Supervisory Training, Management Development Program (GS12-14), a proposed SES Candidate Development Program (GS-14–15), and the SES Forums. Numerous training and development opportunities are available to all employees through e-learning technology and the Learning Management System. All Commerce jobs are posted on the COOL system, which is accessible to all employees from their desktop.

According to the recent Merit Systems Principles Survey 2000, top performing employees rate opportunities for advancement, learning new competencies in current job, and career development as key components of attraction and retention. The concerns of the Commerce affinity groups are in alignment with these findings. For example, both the Asian Pacific American Network (APANET) and Blacks in Government (BIG) expressed concern with career advancement, training, and a perceived glass ceiling at the management and leadership levels. The Commerce Latino Employee Organization (CLEO) expressed several career opportunity concerns that were incorporated in this Recruitment and Retention Plan, and should help ameliorate the Department's under-representation index.

Internal Effort

Training and Career Development. The Department's Office of Human Resources Management has expanded its training and knowledge management staff and technology resources to develop stronger programs for leadership and management development. An exciting, ambitious training program is well underway and addresses the current and future technical and management development needs of this Department. These efforts range from an online training program with over 1,000 course offerings to improve technical skills and close competency gaps of our employees, to our proposed Candidate Development Program, the core component in the executive leadership succession planning for the Department of Commerce. Training and management development programs are either underway or planned for employees at every grade level.

COOL/USA Jobs. As stated previously, the Department will continue to use COOL and USA Jobs to share job opportunities information with potential applicants from within and outside the Federal government. The COOL web site has been a major source of applicants.

Quality of Employee Work Life. We will continue to provide and develop effective programs to improve employees' work lives and job satisfaction. Programs include alternative work schedules, transit subsidies, recruitment bonuses, retention allowances, and family friendly programs like child care assistance and teleworking.

Exit Survey/Interview Process. The Department expects to develop and deploy an exit survey and pilot it at one or more bureaus. Data collected from the survey will provide valuable information and will be used to develop strategies to retain desired employees.

Within the Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration, exit interviews for each departing employee will be piloted. Commerce expects through this pilot to improve our recruitment process and gain relevant information such as: the reasons people are leaving the agency, where they are going, and how they were recruited for new opportunities.

Strengthening the resume management process is a critical component for improving the overall quality of candidates. Once student resumes have been identified they will be entered into the Human Capital Asset Management System (HCAMS), which is linked to our COOL system. HCAMS is the successor to the resume database. Resumes will be categorized according to standard criteria such as discipline, school, and GPA. Human Capital Asset Managers will shepherd the resumes through the system, working closely with applicants to identify employment opportunities and working with bureau managers to identify talent. All selections will be merit based. The Office of Human Resources Management ensures that accountability for the system and performance metrics will be utilized.

Summary

To date, the Department and its bureaus pursue top talent jointly and independently. The Department's Recruitment and Retention Plan has been developed to improve and strengthen this process. Targeted recruitment sources have been identified with Minority

Serving Institutions, colleges and universities with specialized technical curricula, and diverse student bodies. However, collaboration between the Department and bureaus must be improved to better utilize limited recruitment budgets and improve on campus presence and university relationships. In addition to utilizing the recruitment flexibilities, mentioned earlier, other creative initiatives such as accelerated promotion and training programs, must be explored and their use optimized to expedite the construction of a highly productive, mission-appropriate workforce. These strategic initiatives must be carefully integrated to incorporate the goals and objectives of the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program, and other affirmative efforts addressing people with disabilities, including veterans.

In order to have a high performing organization, organizations must have a successful balance of leadership, innovative practices, and effective systems and equipment. To support this outcome, Commerce will take and/or lead its bureaus in executing appropriate measures to meet this outcome. Because recruitment and retention are integrally tied, at this time, this plan combines both the Departmental recruitment and retention plans.